Daniel Polanco Polanco 1

Professor Kingsley

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Bob Marley: The Legend that Never Died

Legends don’t come around very often, but during the twentieth century a legend was born whose legacy never died. Coming from the island of Jamaica, Bob Marley’s life is an epitome one that even today continues to have such a powerful significance not only to the Jamaican community, but for the entire world. Because he had a god giving talent for music, Bob Marley demonstrated that his country’s Reggae was not only a type of music that inspired many, it was a movement. When someone was to refer to a certain crisis, Bob Marley music will relate to it. Bob was a musical spiritualist. It is important to take into account the ancestry of this legend, to be the first superstar emerging from the Third World, Bob Marley was one of the most captivating and exigent performers of the twentieth century. During his music carrier, Bob Marley composed several songs that defined what he wanted to point out. His music was magic to many because Bob found the right combination to relate it to his people, because every song contained a relevant meaning.

Bob Marley was born Robert Nesta Marley on February 6, 1945 in the small village of Nine Mile in [Saint Ann Parish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Ann_Parish), Jamaica. His father Norval Sinclair Marley was a white English Jamaican. His mother was a young Jamaican woman by the name of [Cedella Booker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cedella_Booker). Norval was the main provider and also financial supporter for his wife and child, but nonstop traveling limited his time with the family. Bob Marley was about 10 years old when his father

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passed away from a heart attack . During his childhood Marley suffered from a lot of racial prejudice due to his mixed racial origins. One thing that became very relevant in Bob’s childhood was that he faced questions about his own racial identity. He left school at the age of 14, when little did he know he left school to become a unique marvel of music.

The street culture of Jamaica along with international issues became his motivation to write music that had the ability to touch millions. As he sang “his redemption songs” (White 2006, pg. 4) Bob Marley portrayed his passion and love for the people. **“Get up, Stand Up”** was a song written by Bob Marley in 1973 that appeared on the album *Burnin’.* This was one of the many famous songs by the “Tuff Gong” were the theme transcends all religious and political boundaries. The song specifically points out the border between the Rastafarian religion and that of roots of Christianity where Christianity preaches that to achieve eternal [salvation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation) one must accept Jesus as the Son of God who died in the holy cross for one's sins. The song's is also a strong inspirational track, clearly made it one of Marley's more political songs. In the song he says, “You can fool some people sometimes But you can't fool all the people all the time So now we see the light, We gonna stand up for our right” (Marley 1973). These lines are a clear example of how Bob Marley’s song serve as motivation for the people to not sit and do nothing, but to stand and strong as one and fight for what was right especially in times were the government violated the rights of the people, most importantly in Jamaica.

**“War”** was a song that debuted in the album *Rastaman Vibration* in 1976 that Bob Marley wrote to serve as a very strong anti-racism statement. In this song he honors Haile Selassie I for calling for action against racial inequality and international injustice. The song uses

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several parts of Selassie’s 1963 speech at the UN were called for equality among all without regard to race, class, or nationality in his constant cry for peace. Also in the speech, Selassie urged U.N. officials and other country representatives to disarm nuclear weapons, and to end international exploitation, most importantly in Africa (Marley Fam. 2002),. In the song he says “That until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all, without regard to race, Dis a war”. This song was more like Bob Marley’s cry to stop racial inequality and international injustice because he related his own views to someone else’s views.

One of Bob Marley’s Classics was the song **“Buffalo Solider”**, written in 1980 on the last CD *Confrontation* recored in 1983. This was a song that Bob made it a big hit and one of his best-known songs of all time. The song talks about the black U.S. cavalry regiments, that fought vigorously in the Indian Wars. In the song Bob Marley putted together the fight of the soldiers to a fight for survival, a clear symbol of black resistance. The song is also related to the fourteen key black campaigners, whom the Indians had nicknamed "buffalo soldiers," were awarded the Medal of Honor as part of a public relations move to justify and glorify the genocide of Native Americans, giving emphasis on the U.S. government's policy of manifest destiny(Marley Fam. 2002). Such were the tactics that, then as now, comprised the politics of neutralization. Bob Marley sings “"Stolen from Africa, brought to America, Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival", "Buffalo soldier, dreadlock rasta". For him they were like Rasta man because like them they also fought for their believes as well.

Not only in Jamaica was Bob Marley’s mind focused on, but I all around the world as well. **“Zimbabwe”** is a song by Bob Marley & The Wailers‎. The song had been released on the 1979 album *Survival*. Bob Marley wrote the song in order to support the freedom fighters in

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Rhodesia, also to acknowledge the Zimbabwe Independence Celebration in Rhodesia, Bob was a supporter of revolutionary Third World struggles. On April of 1980, Bob Marley's visited Zimbabwe to play at the Independence Day Celebrations (White. 2006, pg 2), he found out that the freedom fighters were singing the lyrics of this song far better than their own new national anthem, which illustrates how deep the Bob’s music got into the people, the impact of his lyrics was great one. Bob became the only artist to be invited by the new Zimbabwean government to this celebration. The song says, “No more internal power struggle We come together, to overcome The little trouble Soon we will find out Who is the real revolutionary 'Cause I don't want my people To be contrary”.

Reggae is legitimately part of rock and roll. Bob Marley described it as “Reggae music, soul music, rock music - every song is a sign.”(Marley 1976). Marley’s own symbolism derivative from his beliefs as a Rastafarian, a cult that revered Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia as a god who would lead oppressed blacks back to an African homeland, to represent his believes Bob Marley had firsthand particulars of the deprivations of the Jamaican ghettos. His lyrics mixed religious holiness with calls for political uprising, and Marley delivered them in a passionate, declamatory voice. Notwithstanding of how anyone heard it, Bob Marley’s wrote political music that fitted for dancing his music was a powerful potion for those times of political troubled times. All of his music was power and inspiration for many, and even today, almost thirty years after his tragic death, his legacy and his music never died.

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